

**CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
CITY OF WATERTOWN
January 14, 2008
7:00 P.M.**

MAYOR JEFFREY E. GRAHAM PRESIDING

PRESENT: **COUNCIL MEMBER ROXANNE M. BURNS
COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH M. BUTLER, JR.
COUNCIL MEMBER PETER L. CLOUGH
COUNCIL MEMBER JEFFREY M. SMITH
MAYOR GRAHAM**

ALSO PRESENT: **CITY MANAGER MARY M. CORRIVEAU
ATTORNEY ROBERT J. SLYE**

Community Development Block Grant

Mr. Mix, Planning and Community Development Coordinator and Mr. Phil Smith, Avalon Associates addressed the chair explaining the proposed 2008 CDBG Small Cities Application. They explained that the Office for Small Cities has indicated that downtown projects are a priority. The proposed program is for rehabilitating upper floors of downtown building for housing. This would address two of the City's current priorities, which are downtown revitalization and increasing the number of housing units. It was explained that the proposal is to combine CDBG funds, HOME funds and the Main Street grant funding to create an incentive package for downtown property owners. A backup plan would be to design a program that would allow the City to use the resources for other programs in the downtown area. It was also explained that if the owners were not interested in doing the program, the funds could be used to do rental rehab in an area slightly larger than downtown. The area would encompass the historic district, the walkable tour and the neighborhoods surrounding it. The area would extend from High to Massey Streets and from the river to Mullin Street. Mr. Smith also commented that the partnership has worked out very well between the City and Neighbors of Watertown.

Mayor Graham asked about the viability of loft apartments in the City.

Mr. Smith explained that they need to obtain the written interest from the property owners to determine if there is even any interest in doing this type of program. He explained that he has asked Mrs. Hoffman to help contact business owners in the downtown. This has not yet been done as they are waiting to do outreach on the Main Street program at the same time.

Mrs. Corriveau asked how many units would be done.

Mr. Smith responded that there will probably be fewer than 12 housing units done in a year. He also advised that the Franklin Building project is for 18 units.

Council Member Clough asked if the low income units in the downtown are full.

Mrs. Corriveau will talk with Mr. Beasley about this.

Mr. Smith referred to the income levels and explained that the individuals living in the apartments probably do not reach the income level amounts listed on the informational sheet. Therefore, rent limits might be a problem.

Council Member Smith asked the common areas.

Mr. Smith explained that while the program would be covering the units, the common areas could be done during the renovations through the part loan and part grant program.

Mayor Graham mentioned the fact that many of these units are rented by older people and people with disabilities and asked about the issue of elevators.

Council Member Butler asked if an exiting elevator would have to be updated.

Mr. Smith explained that while it could be, it wasn't a requirement.

Council Member Clough suggested that since the buildings are close together, they should look at an elevator that would service more than one of the buildings. He asked if the grants could be used for elevators.

Mr. Smith explained that the money could be used for that. However, the property owners would have to agree on a shared elevator.

Mrs. Corriveau advised that staff would like a sense of the Council on if they want to move forward with this.

Council concurred to move forward.

Council Member Clough remarked that while he doesn't object to the survey, he would like an answer to his question concerning the number of units that are full at this time in the downtown. He also asked if the owner of the Woolworth's building would be contacted.

Mrs. Corriveau responded that he would be.

Proposed Non-Exclusive Franchise Agreement

Mrs. Corriveau explained that staff wanted to make the Council aware of this prior to it coming before Council for a vote. She explained that this is a non-exclusive agreement to allow the City to enter into agreements with others, as well. She explained that the conduit is an economic development tool.

Mr. Keenan, IT Director, addressed the chair answering questions posed by the Council concerning this. He explained that while he doesn't know the amount of revenue this would generate, he remarked that it would be based on footage, the number of fibers and the number of places that would want to be on the system. He explained that the City would be selling space only. The City fibers are separate.

Council Member Butler referred to the franchisee's duties in section 5 and asked how big an undertaking it would be to remove the fibers.

Mr. Keenan explained that it would be done by cutting one end and pulling the fiber out. He explained that the conduit varies in size from 2 to 4 inches.

Mrs. Corriveau advised that as the City rebuilds streets, they will look to see if it makes sense to put conduit in at the time.

Mayor Graham asked what assurances the City would have that they won't slice into our system.

Mr. Keenan explained that this is why the City's is separate. He also explained that there are no emissions from the fibers and there is a sound infrastructure.

Attorney Slye remarked that there is a \$10,000 penal bond required before the franchisee shall be permitted to commence installation of its cable.

Preliminary Report –Holcomb and Mullin St. Intersection

Mr. Hauk, City Engineer, addressed the chair answering questions concerning the preliminary report.

Council Member Smith questioned the fact that there is not a recommendation for a traffic control device at this time.

Mr. Hauk explained that these numbers are a snap shot of a one week period. He remarked that he would like to have the report include information from the surrounding intersections.

Council Member Clough referred to the house on the corner that has had three or four cars in their front yard as a result of accidents at that intersection.

Mr. Hauk remarked that signals can not be put in to regulate speed and the accidents were not attributable to the intersection itself.

Council Member Burns responded that there are three reasons for accidents at this location. They are speeders on Holcomb Street; impatience on Mullin Street with drivers pulling out because they feel they've waited long enough and cars that are parked on

Mullin Street by the apartment building. She remarked that this has been an ongoing problem for years and at one time, the suggestion was made to reconfigure the intersection of Clinton and Massey Streets.

Mrs. Corriveau remarked that, to her knowledge, reconfiguration of that intersection was not in the plans.

Council Member Burns remarked that at that time, she believed there was merit to it.

Council Member Butler commented that while he respects the report, there are a number of people on the street that would have a strong disagreement with what the report says. The houses are so close to the roadway, that damage could be caused to their homes if there was an accident. He stated that a stop sign would make people stop.

Attorney Slye explained that when a municipality engages in regulating traffic, they are constrained to do so after a bonafide traffic study. If the municipality does what the traffic study done by a traffic engineer says to do, the municipality has immunity if there is an accident. However, if the municipality goes against the study results, they lose that immunity.

Council Member Butler responded that this should be communicated to the residents on Holcomb Street.

Council Member Smith asked if that is true for caution lights.

Attorney Slye responded that it is true for any signalization. He also recommended that the traffic study not be done in-house.

Mayor Graham asked what would be so bad about erroring on the side of caution and putting in signalization.

Attorney Slye explained that it could cause accidents.

Council Member Burns asked if staff was certain that it hadn't been done in the past. And, if not done, she would be somewhat surprised.

Mr. Hauk explained that he would want to use current data and to his knowledge, it wasn't done before.

Council Member Burns asked if it would be possible to pull out the recommendations from the streetscape project for Clinton and Holcomb. She remarked that she would like to see a recommendation come back for the length and cost of the study.

Council Member Clough commented that when Mr. Hiller was here, he would just call NYS DOT for a recommendation.

Attorney Slye responded that this was not the same as a traffic study.

Mrs. Corriveau advised that Mr. Fraser had been hired to gather the data.

Council Member Clough stated that government moves so slowly. He asked what the timeframe would be.

Mr. Hauk explained that it would be done next summer.

Council Member Butler stated that there were 23 accidents at the intersection. He asked if there were 23 accidents at any of the intersections that have 4-way stops.

Attorney Slye explained that there have been several accidents at Sherman/Mullin intersection. Council made this a 4-way stop without a traffic study.

Mrs. Corriveau will have a report to Council outlining costs and timeframes.

Riverside Gardens

Mrs. Corriveau stated that this is a Council decision. Council reviewed the report and the memo received from Attorney Slye.

Mayor Graham commented that the City has done a number of projects that have benefited the owners.

Council Member Clough remarked that the owners were well aware of the problems before the purchase.

Council Member Burns remarked that the City would be setting a bad precedent if they agreed to Mr. O'Riley's and Ms. Daniels' request.

Council concurred.

Council Member Butler remarked that while he agrees with the rest of the members, Council could, in the future, look at each on a case by case basis.

Mrs. Corriveau will respond to the owners.

City Owned Property

Council selected the following city owned properties for **auction:**

609 Bronson Street
M30 Charles Street
M32 Charles Street
M31 Cleveland Street
66 Clover Street
525 Main Street East
531 Main Street East
VL-3 Marra Drive
44 Merline Avenue
568 Merline Avenue
VL-2 Merline Avenue
VL-4 Merline Avenue
33 BK 11 Stuart Street
35 Stuart Street
36 Stuart Street
733 Rear Superior Street
114 William Street
244 High Street

The following properties will be offered to **Habitat for Humanity** and if they don't want them, the properties will go for auction:

571 Arsenal Street
611 Bradley Street
117 Exchange Street
126 Lynde Street West

The following properties will be offered to **Neighbors of Watertown:**

612 Bronson Street
610 Bronson Street

These parcels will have to be combined.

The following properties will be **held back for a zoning decision:**

814 Pearl Street
7 Pearl Street
8 Pearl Street
200 Hazelhurst Avenue

The following property will be **held until the street construction has been completed:**

122 Ten Eyck Street

The accompanying notes explain the following properties:

VL- 6 Arsenal Street – McDonalds will be contacted to see if they wish to purchase this narrow piece of land on which one of their signs is located.

1023 Ferguson Avenue – Contact neighbors to see if they are interested. If so, they would be responsible for the survey. If no interest, it will go to auction.

VL Flower Avenue East -Contact neighbors to see if they are interested. If so, they would be responsible for the survey. If no interest, it will go to auction.

Council selected the following non-city owned properties (city is holder of the tax sale certificate) for **auction:**

VL Cedar Street 7-10-104.00
VL-R Cedar Street 7-10-103.001
430 Court Street
804 State Street
1200 Washington Street

The following properties could be considered **brownfields** and could be placed in the NYS ERP program. Staff will look at the Sterns and Wheeler proposal and submit a recommendation to the Council.

457 Court Street
560 Main Street West
451 Martin Street
465 Martin Street
1543 State Street

The following properties will be **demolished**:

848 Anne Street *also needs petroleum cleanup
129 Sherman Street * after demolition, title will be transferred to
Neighbors of Watertown

164 Main Avenue * interest has been expressed in this. It may be
purchased and torn down by the purchaser.

Training Opportunities

Mrs. Corriveau advised Council that the Local Government Conference will be held on
March 27th at Jefferson Community College.

Wayne Zimmer, Katherine Street, addressed the chair concerning the dog waste plastic
bags that are all over the neighborhood.

Mrs. Corriveau explained that the waste receptacle was removed at the neighbors'
request. The bag holder was not removed at the time.

Work session ended at 10:14 p.m.

Donna M. Dutton
City Clerk